

Mercy, Week #3 – Other Mercies

We have now looked both at God’s mercy and our mercy. But there are aspects of mercy that we have not considered yet, and other biblical virtues that we can compare against mercy. In these readings you will find more situations where mercy is used in interesting ways, or linked to other topics. These will stretch our understanding of mercy further, and open up more practical applications of mercy as we respond to God’s own mercy to us in Christ. You can also find these devotions and other resources for the series online at <http://stjamescroydon.org/sermons>.

Day	Passage	Starter Questions	Going Deeper	Prayer
1	Luke 6:31-38	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What examples of mercy does Jesus give in this passage? Which one do think is the hardest to do? 2. Why is our Father’s mercy a good reason for us to be merciful (v.36)? 3. Would your non-Christian friends agree with this picture of mercy? How would you explain it to them? 	Does this passage mean that we should never seek justice for the things our enemies do? Is mercy the opposite of justice?	Thank God once again for his mercy towards you. Think of someone who needs your forgiveness and ask God for the strength to give them lasting forgiveness.
2	Rom 12:1-8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What motivates us to use the various gifts mentioned in this passage? 2. The passage does not say what it means by ‘showing mercy’ (v.8), but from the other gifts in the list, what kinds of actions might the author have in mind? 3. What do you think it means by showing mercy ‘cheerfully’? 	If showing mercy is a special gift from God, does that excuse the rest of us from being merciful?	Reflect on any recent opportunities you have had for mercy. If appropriate, confess any lack of ‘cheerfulness’ and ask God for the right mindset for mercy.
3	James 3:13-18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some of the good and bad character traits mentioned in the passage? 2. How are such things expressions of ‘wisdom’ (v.17), whether good or bad? 3. How is mercy different to other things listed, like being considerate, peace-loving, impartial etc? 	Most of the other attributes of ‘wisdom that comes from heaven’ have to do with relationships. How can mercy be thought of promoting and maintaining relationships?	Pray for the kind of heavenly wisdom which is full of mercy and good fruit.
4	Matt 6:1-4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What warning does Jesus give in this passage? 2. What do we lose when we do acts of mercy with a view to our reputation? 3. What do you think Jesus means, in practice, by ‘do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.’? <p>Note: Giving to the needy’ is another form of the New Testament word for mercy.</p>	From your knowledge of mercy in the Bible, what is it about acts of mercy that tends to keep them quiet rather than publicized?	Praise God for his mercy which is our great and undeserved reward. Pray for the self-awareness to avoid publicizing our own acts of mercy.
5	Luke 16:19-31	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the obvious needs that Lazarus has in this passage 2. Why is the rich man particularly guilty for not helping Lazarus? 3. Why is it ironic that the rich man asks Abraham for ‘pity’ or ‘mercy’? 	Why does Abraham think that someone rising from the dead will not help the rich man’s brothers to learn about mercy, any more than reading Moses and the Prophets? Read John 5:46 for a hint.	Ask God, in his mercy, to keep you from overlooking people nearby who need your mercy.
6	Phil 2:1-8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List some of the various instructions this passage gives for Christian behaviour. 2. What is the motivation given for these instructions (v.1)? 3. Why do you think ‘tenderness and compassion’ for others are a natural attitude in response to what Jesus has done for us? 	There is an obvious emotional component to showing mercy. But how is mercy more than just a compassionate attitude?	Pray through the verses describing what Jesus did for us (v6-8). Ask God to give you a greater sense of comfort and fellowship and compassion from what he has done, so that you can have the same attitude towards others.
7	Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What new things about God’s mercy or our mercy have you learnt over this series of devotions? 2. Which passage or passages have you found most helpful or challenging? 3. What personal opportunities for mercy have you identified along the way? How are you going in showing mercy? 	Imagine a non-Christian friend asks you to define mercy for them. How would you answer?	Pray the prayer for the series below, and expand on it with your own prayers and reflections from the series.

Prayer for the Series: *Merciful father, let the good news of your mercy in Christ be clear to me in your word today. Help me to be a merciful as you are merciful, and protect me from being an unmerciful servant. Let your mercy be clear not just in your word, but in my life. In Jesus name, Amen.*